

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDS #0277/01 0361432
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 051432Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9422
INFO RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 1068
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 000277

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E , AND INR/AA
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER
CJTF-HOA AND USCENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ET](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SUDAN: ETHIOPIAN STATE MINISTER TEKEDA ON SUDANESE
RELATIONS AND THE DARFUR REBELS

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for Reasons: 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C/NF) SUMMARY. On February 1, Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Tekeda Alemu told Ambassador, AF/SPG Director Lauren Landis, and PolOffs that he expected Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor to be able to help improve relations between the United States and Sudan. Tekeda noted that bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Sudan were improving and that a minister level Ethiopian delegation would be traveling to Juba soon to further cement their growing economic cooperation. Tekeda also revealed that his government had recently rejected a Darfur rebel request for military support to fight against the Sudanese government.
END SUMMARY.

US-SUDAN RELATIONSHIP SHOULD IMPROVE

12. (C/NF) Landis opened the meeting by thanking Tekeda for his government's positive engagement with the Sudanese government and for Ethiopia's contribution of troops and helicopters for the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur. She queried whether the Ethiopian government had recently met with newly appointed Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor on the margins of the ongoing African Union Summit in Addis Ababa noting that Deng was working hard to improve US-Sudanese relations. Tekeda responded that he had just met with Deng and that they were good friends. Tekeda expressed confidence that Deng would make progress in his efforts. He said Sudanese President Bashir was not ideologically driven nor prone to make decisions based on hostility or emotion. Tekeda commented that Khartoum would "push" the relationship without going too far. Tekeda also cautioned that Deng will need "space to move" and that the US should realize that from time to time Deng will need to appear to be capable of pushing back at the US government in order to maintain support from Khartoum.

13. (C/NF) Tekeda added that the Ethiopian government would continue to remain engaged on the peace process in Sudan, but that they would do so quietly with little publicity. He said they would focus their efforts in those areas where others were not engaged.

ETHIOPIAN-SUDANESE RELATIONSHIP IMPROVING

14. (C/NF) Tekeda stated that the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan was improving, although he characterized the relationship as more of a "love-hate" affair. He said that the confidence of both governments in each other was growing. Regarding the southerners in particular, he said an Ethiopian government delegation would be traveling to Juba soon to follow up on two economic cooperation agreements signed during Salva Kiir's visit to Addis Ababa in December 2007.

DARFUR REBELS SEEK MILITARY SUPPORT FROM ADDIS ABABA

15. (C/NF) Tekeda said that in a recent visit to Addis Ababa the Darfur rebels had asked the Ethiopian government for military support to fight against the Sudanese government. Tekeda declined to identify which rebels had visited, but he said that Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin rejected their request. The rebels also wanted to open offices in Ethiopia. Tekeda characterized the rebels as, "very tough" and unwilling to discuss any type of compromise with the Sudanese government and instead they insisted that President Bashir must be removed. Tekeda commented that Ethiopia was willing to deal with the Darfur rebels as the Ethiopian government dealt with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement during their struggle by looking for peaceful opportunities to help solve the problems in Sudan.

COMMENT

16. (C/NF) The Ethiopian government's growing alarm at the potential consequences for Ethiopia if the Comprehensive Peace Agreement should fall apart is clearly motivating their increasing engagement in Sudan. Ethiopia appears capable of upholding the delicate balance of trying to please both the North and the South without appearing to favor one over the other. In this regard, the Ethiopian government appears well placed to serve as an interlocutor between the various parties inside Sudan. END COMMENT.
YAMAMOTO